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South Asian Languages

South Asian languages are rich in linguistic diversity and number. This book explores the similarities and differences of sixty languages from the four different language families (Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan [Indo-European], and Tibeto-Burman [Sino-Tibetan]). It focuses on the syntactic typology of these languages and the high degree of syntactic convergence, with special reference to the notion of "India as a linguistic area." Several areas of current theoretical interest such as anaphora, control theory, case and agreement, relative clauses, and the significance of thematic roles in grammar are discussed. The analysis presented has significant implications for current theories of syntax, verbal semantics, first and second language acquisition, structural language typology, and historical linguistics. The book will be of interest to linguists working on the description of South Asian languages, as well as syntacticians wishing to discover more about the common structure of languages within this region.

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Dedicated
to my parents
Karumuri Suseela and Karumuri V. Rathnam
&
to my most respected teacher
D. V. Rama Krishna Rao

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(Some relevant material concerning the syntactic typology of SALs is placed on the web at the URL www.cambridge.org/subbarao – hereafter referred to as "the Website")

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Preface

This book takes forward the work I have been doing for the last thirty years on the syntactic typology and convergence in South Asian languages. South Asian languages, many of which are not even well studied and documented, belong to different genetic groups. Though they share common structural traits, they exhibit their own unique properties, providing a great opportunity for investigation. In this book several new phenomena that I found in South Asian languages have been analyzed in the Principles and Parameters approach.

The fact that there is no work available that compares and contrasts the rich variety of data of these languages in a suitable theoretical framework was a major motivating factor to write a book of this nature. The bulk of the empirical evidence that I gathered, and the insights gained, further encouraged me to pursue this work.

Writing this book – which required an enormous effort in understanding the intricacies of the data and the structure of many South Asian languages – the issues involved, and attempting to present them collectively within the limitations of space and time, entailed an enormous amount of work and organization.

The findings presented in here will be of great utility to scholars working on individual languages, to typologists as well as to theoretical linguists interested in the study of language universals and parametric variation.

The range of topics chosen, the number of issues discussed and the amount of data provided to substantiate our arguments will enable the reader to gain a comprehensive view of the intricacies of the syntax of South Asian languages.

This book will demonstrate the relevance and significance of structural typology that derives its insights from a formal theoretical framework, and employs it fruitfully for typological work.

This work, I hope, will provide an incentive for further research on the syntactic typology of each language family and on individual languages of the subcontinent.

There is a detailed discussion of a number of issues that are relevant to the study of the syntactic typology of South Asian languages available at the URL www.cambridge.org/subbarao.

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In 2005 Professor Peri Bhaskararao of the Institute for the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (ILCAA), invited me there as Visiting Professor for a year and provided me an intellectual environment with unlimited infrastructural facilities in which to pursue my research goals. It was at the Institute in Tokyo that the first draft of this book was written. But for his generous help, active support and sincere commitment towards an academic cause, the book would never have been completed. I greatly benefited from the discussions on Telugu syntax with him. I owe a lot to him and to his Institute, which cannot be expressed in words. I am deeply indebted to Bhaskararao.

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Abbreviations

AA	Austro-Asiatic
abl	ablative
abs	absolutive case
acc	accusative
adjr	adjectivalizer
adv	adverb
AGR/agr	agreement
cem	collaborative effort marker
caus	causative
CFC	contrastive focus clitic
cl	classifier
com	comitative
COMP/comp	complementizer
cond	conditional
conj	conjunction
corr	correlative
CP	Complement Phrase
cp	conjunctive participle
cpm	conjunctive participial marker
CRP	Case Resistance Principle
dat	dative
DD_1	definite determiner 1
DD_2	definite determiner 2
decl	declarative
def	definite marker
def agr	default agreement
det	determiner
dis	disjunction
DM/dm	deictic marker
DO	direct object
Dom	differential object marking
DP	Determiner Phrase

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DR	Dravidian
DSC	dative subject construction
dub	dubitative
ECM	Exceptional Case Marking
EHRC	Externally Headed Relative Clause
emph	emphatic marker
epen	epenthetic
epm	emotive predicate morpheme
EPP	Extended Prejection Principle
erg	ergative
ev	evidentiality
excl	exclusive
f	feminine
FC	final (right peripheral) complementizer
fin	finite
foc	focus
FOFC	Final-over-Final Constraint
fut	future
gen	genitive
GF	Grammatical Function
gp mkr	group marker
gpm	generic possession marker
hon	honorific
IA	Indo-Aryan
IC	initial (left peripheral) complementizer
IHRC	Internally Headed Relative Clause
imp	imperative
imperf	imperfect
inch	inchoative
incl	inclusive
ind	indicative
INFL	inflection
instr	instrumental
intr	intransitive
IO	indirect object
IP	Inflection Phrase
LF	Logical Form
loc	locative
m	masculine
midhon	mid-honorific
mkr	marker
neg	negative

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neg pple	negative participle
neut	neuter
nh	non-human
nm	non-masculine
NNS	non-nominative subject
nom	nominative
nonfut	non-future
non hon	non-honorific
NP	Noun Phrase
nozr	nominalizer
NPAH	Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy
NPI	Negative Polarity Item
O	Object
oam	object agreement marker
o ben	other-benefactive
obl	oblique
OGEN	Object of the Genitive
OO	oblique object
OV	Object Verb
p	plural
P and P approach	Principles and Parameters approach
pass	passive
per	person
perf	perfect
PIC	Phase Impenetrability Constraint
pm	procrastination marker
pn	person
pol q mkr / pol	polarity (*yes/no*) question marker
poss	possessive
PP	postpositional phrase
pple	participle
pres	present
PrIC	Propositional Island Constraint
PRO	Big PRO (uncase-marked, un-governed)
progr	progressive
pron	pronominal
prox	proximate
pst	past
q	question
quot	quotative

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rel	relative
S	Subject
S-O-V	Subject-Object-Verb
S-V-O	Subject-Verb-Object
s	singular
SA	South Asian / South Asia
sam	subject agreement marker
self aff	self-affective
self ben	self-benefactive
Spec	Specifier
sub	subject
sup mkr	superlative marker
TB	Tibeto-Burman
TEC	Thematic Eligibility Condition
thematic S	thematic Sentence
TP	Tense Phrase
tr	transitive
V	Verb
VP/vP	Verb Phrase
VR	verbal reflexive
VREC	verbal reciprocal
V-S-O	Verb-Subject-Object

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